AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Amend the claims as follows.

Claims 1-44. (Canceled)

45. (Currently Amended) An isolated HCV antibody specifically binding ~~recognizing~~ a type 3 HCV antigen selected from the group consisting of:

(i) an antigen consisting of 5 or more contiguous amino acids selected from the region spanning positions 140 to ~~319~~ 191 of the Core ~~Core/E1~~ region of HCV type 3a,

~~(ii) an antigen consisting of 5 or more contiguous amino acids selected from the region spanning positions 1556 to 1650 of the NS3/4 region of HCV type 3a,~~

~~(iii) an antigen consisting of 5 or more contiguous amino acids selected from the region spanning positions 1632 to 1764 of the NS3/4 region of HCV type 3a,~~

~~(iv) an antigen consisting of 5 or more contiguous amino acids selected from the region spanning positions 1556 to 1764 of the NS3/4 region of HCV type 3a,~~

~~(v) an antigen consisting of 5 or more contiguous amino acids selected from the region spanning positions 1 to 115 of the Core region of HCV type 3c; and~~

~~(vi) an antigen consisting of 5 or more contiguous amino acids selected from the region spanning positions 2661 to 2753 of the NS5B region of HCV type 3c;~~

wherein ~~any of~~ the ~~antigens in (i) to (iv)~~ antigen contains at least one HCV genotype 3a-specific amino acid ~~or wherein any of the antigens in (v) or (vi) contains at least one HCV genotype 3c-specific amino acid~~.

46. (Currently Amended) The HCV antibody according to claim 45 wherein said

antigen is consisting of 5 or more contiguous amino acids selected from

(i) the region spanning positions 140 to 191 ~~319~~ of the Core~~Core/E1~~ region of HCV type 3a identified by SEQ ID NOs: 14, 16, 18, 20, 24,

~~(ii) the region spanning positions 1556 to 1650 of the NS3/4 region of HCV type 3a identified by SEQ ID NO:30,~~

~~(iii) the region spanning positions 1632 to 1764 of the NS3/4 region of HCV type 3a identified by SEQ ID NOs:32, 36,~~

~~(iv) the region spanning positions 1556 to 1764 of the NS3/4 region of HCV type 3a identified by SEQ ID NO:223,~~

~~(v) the region spanning positions 1 to 115 of the Core region of HCV type 3c identified by SEQ ID NO:148, and~~

~~(vi) the region spanning positions 2661 to 2753 of the NS5B region of HCV type 3c identified by SEQ ID NO:150,~~

wherein the antigen ~~any of the antigens in (i) to (iv)~~ contains at least one HCV genotype 3a-specific amino acid ~~or wherein any of the antigens in (v) or (vi) contains at least one HCV genotype 3c-specific amino acid~~.

47. (Previously Presented) The HCV antibody according to claim 45 which has been produced upon immunization of a mammal with any of said antigens.

48. (Previously Presented) The HCV antibody according to claim 45 which is a monoclonal antibody.

49. (Previously Presented) A humanized version of an HCV antibody according to claim 48.

50. (Currently Amended) The humanized version of an HCV antibody according to claim 49 which has been ~~is being~~ humanized by means of recombinant DNA technology.

51. (Currently Amended) The HCV antibody according to claim 45 whichwhich ~~is~~ further comprising a label.

52. (Previously Presented) The HCV antibody according to claim 51 wherein said label is of the enzymatic, fluorescent or radioactive type.

53. (Previously Presented) A composition comprising an HCV antibody according to claim 45.

54. (Previously Presented) A kit for determining the presence of HCV antigens present in a biological sample, said kit comprising:

(a) at least one HCV antibody according to claim 45,

(b) a buffer enabling the binding reaction between an HCV antibody of (a) and an HCV antigen present in said biological sample; or components necessary for producing said buffer,

(c) a means for detecting the immune complexes formed between an HCV

antibody of (a) and an HCV antigen present in said biological sample.

55. (Previously Presented) A kit for determining the presence of HCV antigens present in a biological sample, said kit comprising at least one HCV antibody according to claim 45.

56. (Previously Presented) A method for determining the presence of HCV antigens present in a biological sample, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) contacting said biological sample with at least one HCV antibody according to claim 45,

(b) detecting the immune complexes formed in (a),

(c) inferring from (b) the presence of said HCV antigens in said biological sample.